

Tidings

How to Reach Us

At Our Office

7141 Sherbrooke St. West
Room SC 03-3 (Loyola)

Office Hours

Alternate Wednesdays 6:00pm – 9:00pm
Dates: Dec. 1 & Dec. 15
(Or by appointment)

By Phone

(514) 324-9316 General Info
(514) 848-7441 Please leave a message

By E-Mail

corsair@lochlomond.net or
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Editorial

Volume 4, Number 5

I give greetings once again to all our faithful readers. I would like to take this time to wish one and all a good Yule this year. Please do take care when you're out celebrating.

Now that I have the preaching out of the way, I'd like to rant a little. I find it very sad that no one has come forward with contributions to be put in this newsletter. This is, after all, a resource that is at the disposal of the community. So, if at any time, you do wish to put something in our newsletter, let me know. I can always be reached at the following email address: tygerwyld@fastmail.ca.

As always, any complaints (shudder) or compliments (hurrah) may be left at the CUPS office.

Blessings to all!

Why the Heck...?

Come join CUPS at its monthly General Meetings. We will hold discussions on a variety of topics of interest to Pagan folk. Come out and contribute or just listen. Suggest a topic for an upcoming meeting!

Next meeting:

Time:

Friday, January 7 at 7:00pm

Place:

Campus Ministry
2090 Mackay (downtown campus)
Please call (514) 848-7441 for info.

Topic: Designing Activities & Promoting them for CUPS

Do you have any ideas for activities, rituals or workshops that CUPS can hold or sponsor? If so, why not come down & share it with your friends.

Also, if you would like to hold an event or ritual and need to find space, help, or anything else, please don't hesitate to let us know. We'd be more than happy to help in any way.

December Happenings

Dec. 1st & Dec. 15th Bardic Circle

7pm at 7141 Sherbrooke West, Room SC 03-3

Join us for two entertaining evenings of song and poetry. Please bring your bardic contribution (a song, poem, story to share, or kooky idea).

Contact Laurie at (514) 848-7441 or corsair@lochlomond.net.

You can also check us out online at <http://bardic.cjb.net>.

December Happenings (cont.)

Dec. 11th Montreal Pagan Grove Yule Faire & Ritual

2:30pm at 486 St. Catherine West, 4th floor, Studio Tanisik.
(Metro McGill or Place des Arts.)

A call to Bards! Merchants bring your wares!
2:30 Faire opening by Mark

WORKSHOPS:

- 1) Leslie: Tai Chi & Self massage (in English)
 - 2) Wolferine: Danse rituelle (en français)
 - 3) Arnon will be leading a workshop on Paganism
 - 4) A-side) Tarot workshop
- 5:30 Yule ritual by Linda and the Silver Fox Grove
6:15 Memorial for the Polytechnique
6:30 Wolferine will present the prize for the contest!
6:45 Feast & Bardic. Bring feast & feast gear.

More information can be had by visiting
<http://www.cam.org/~lokigui/>

About Tidings

Tidings is a free newsletter published by the Concordia University Pagan Society (CUPS) on the last week of each month.

Announcements of interest to the Pagan community will be printed free of charge.

Submissions for upcoming issues must be received by 5pm on the following dates:

December 10th and January 14th

Bulletin Board

*Due to some schedule problems as well as lack of attendance, Bardic Circle's future dates may be changed or put on hiatus.

*CUPS will not be holding a Yule Ritual this year, but we have provided information about the Montreal Pagan Grove's ritual for your perusal.

*Due to holidays, there will be no general meeting for December. There will be 2 meetings in January. The first will be held on Friday, January 7 and the second on Friday, January 28.

Times of the Season

Yule by the Silver Circle

(<http://www.spiritonline.com/wicca/sabbat-yule.html>)

Yule is the Anglo-Saxon word for the festival of the Winter Solstice. It comes from the original 'Iul' meaning 'wheel'. In the old Almanacs, the symbol of a wheel was used to mark Yuletide. The idea behind this is that the year turns like a wheel, The Great Wheel of the Zodiac, The Wheel of Life, of which the spokes are the old ritual occasions. The winter solstice, the rebirth of the Sun, is a particularly important turning point.

According to the Bardic Tradition, the winter solstice was called 'Alban Arthan' by the Druids. It was then that the Chief Druid cut the sacred mistletoe from the Oak, a custom that still lingers with our use of mistletoe for Christmas decoration.

It is interesting to note that Mistletoe is usually banned from churches at Christmas, because of its Pagan association. However, at one time, there used to be a different tradition at York Minister. Stukeley, an eighteenth-century writer noted that on Christmas Eve, they carried Mistletoe to the High Altar in the church and proclaimed a universal liberty and pardon to all sorts of criminals and wrongdoers.

The idea of holding a festival at the winter solstice, to celebrate the rebirth of the Sun was so universal in the ancient world, that the Christians adapted it. No one really knows for sure when Christ was born, but by holding this feast at midwinter, Christ was mystically identified with the Sun.

The Romans celebrated the winter solstice with a festival called Saturnalia. The winter solstice takes place when the Sun enters the Sign of Capricorn, and Saturn, the ruler of Capricorn, was also supposed to be the ruler of the far off Golden age of the past when the world was happy and fruitful. At this time of the year, the Romans decked their houses with boughs of evergreen trees and bushes. People gave each other presents, and all normal business was suspended and social distinctions were forgotten. Servants and slaves were given a feast by their masters who waited the tables.

The Pagan Saxons celebrated the feast of Yule with plenty of ale and blazing fires, of which our Yule log is the last relic. The Yule log is actually an indoor equivalent of the outdoor bonfire of Midwinter Eve. There used to be an old custom of saving a piece of the Yule log, 'for luck' to kindle the next year's blaze.

The evergreens for Yuletide decorations were holly, ivy, mistletoe, bay, rosemary, and the green branches of the box tree. By Candlemas, all these had to be gathered up and burnt, or hobgoblins would haunt the house. In other words, by the time a new tide of life had started to flow, people had to get rid of the past and look to the future. Spring-cleaning was originally a nature ritual. Yule marks the death and re-birth of the Sun God. It also marks the vanquishing of the Holly King, God of the waning year, by the Oak King, God of the waxing year. Old mumming plays, which still exist in some places as part of the Yuletide festivities, are linked with the rebirth of the Sun. Saint George in shining armor, comes to do battle with the dark faced 'Turkish Knight'. Saint George is the Sun, slaying the powers of darkness. However, the victor immediately proclaims that he has slain his brother. Dark and Light, winter and summer are complementary to each other. So on comes the mysterious 'Doctor' with his magical bottle who revives the slain man. There is much rejoicing and all ends well.

Another version of the Oak/Holly King theme is the ritual hunting and killing of a Wren. The Wren, little King of the Waning Year, is killed by the Robin Redbreast, King of the Waxing Year. The Robin finds the Wren hiding in an Ivy bush (or as in some parts of Ireland - a holly bush).

At Yule, the Goddess shows her Life-in-Death aspect. At this season, she is the leprous-white lady, Queen of the cold darkness, yet, this is her moment of giving birth to the child of Promise, the Son-Lover who will refertilize her and bring back light and warmth to her kingdom.

The Winter Solstice rebirth and the Goddess's part in it were portrayed in ancient Egypt by a ritual in which Isis circled the shrine of Osiris seven times, to represent her mourning for him and her wanderings in search of the scattered parts of his body. For the festival, people decorated the outside of their houses with oil-lamps that burned all night. At midnight, the priests emerged from an inner shrine crying, "The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!" and showed the image of a baby to the worshippers. Lamps burning all night at Midwinter survive in Ireland and elsewhere, as the single candle burning in the window at Christmas Eve, lit by the youngest in the house - a symbol of microcosmic welcome to the Macrocosm.

Whatever the form or name of Yuletide celebration, it is a festive time of year throughout the world. With the rebirth of the Sun, the giver of warmth, life and light, people had something to be genuinely happy about.